



General Assembly

February Session, 2016

***Raised Bill No. 275***

LCO No. 2029



Referred to Committee on HUMAN SERVICES

Introduced by:  
(HS)

***AN ACT CONCERNING WORK INCENTIVES FOR PERSONS WHO  
RECEIVE TEMPORARY FAMILY ASSISTANCE.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 17b-112 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2016*):

3 (a) The Department of Social Services shall administer a temporary  
4 family assistance program under which cash assistance shall be  
5 provided to eligible families in accordance with the temporary  
6 assistance for needy families program, established pursuant to the  
7 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of  
8 1996. The Commissioner of Social Services may operate portions of the  
9 temporary family assistance program as a solely state-funded  
10 program, separate from the federal temporary assistance for needy  
11 families program, if the commissioner determines that doing so will  
12 enable the state to avoid fiscal penalties under the temporary  
13 assistance for needy families program. Families receiving assistance  
14 under the solely state-funded portion of the temporary family  
15 assistance program shall be subject to the same conditions of eligibility

16 as those receiving assistance under the federal temporary assistance for  
17 needy families program. Under the temporary family assistance  
18 program, benefits shall be provided to a family for not longer than  
19 twenty-one months, except as provided in subsections (b) and (c) of  
20 this section. For the purpose of calculating said twenty-one-month  
21 time limit, months of assistance received on and after January 1, 1996,  
22 pursuant to time limits under the aid to families with dependent  
23 children program, shall be included. For purposes of this section,  
24 "family" means one or more individuals who apply for or receive  
25 assistance together under the temporary family assistance program. If  
26 the commissioner determines that federal law allows individuals not  
27 otherwise in an eligible covered group for the temporary family  
28 assistance program to become covered, such family may also, at the  
29 discretion of the commissioner, be composed of (1) a pregnant woman,  
30 or (2) a parent, both parents or other caretaker relative and at least one  
31 child who is under the age of eighteen, or who is under the age of  
32 nineteen and a full-time student in a secondary school or its  
33 equivalent. A caretaker relative shall be related to the child or children  
34 by blood, marriage or adoption or shall be the legal guardian of such a  
35 child or pursuing legal proceedings necessary to achieve guardianship.  
36 If the commissioner elects to allow state eligibility consistent with any  
37 change in federal law, the commissioner may administratively transfer  
38 any qualifying family cases under the cash assistance portion of the  
39 state-administered general assistance program to the temporary family  
40 assistance program without regard to usual eligibility and enrollment  
41 procedures. If such families become an ineligible coverage group  
42 under the federal law, the commissioner shall administratively transfer  
43 such families back to the cash assistance portion of the state-  
44 administered general assistance program without regard to usual  
45 eligibility and enrollment procedures to the degree that such families  
46 are eligible for the state program.

47 (b) The Commissioner of Social Services shall exempt a family from  
48 such time-limited benefits for circumstances including, but not limited

49 to: (1) A family with a needy caretaker relative who is incapacitated or  
50 of an advanced age, as defined by the commissioner, if there is no  
51 other nonexempt caretaker relative in the household; (2) a family with  
52 a needy caretaker relative who is needed in the home because of the  
53 incapacity of another member of the household, if there is no other  
54 nonexempt caretaker relative in the household; (3) a family with a  
55 caretaker relative who is not legally responsible for the dependent  
56 children in the household if such relative's needs are not considered in  
57 calculating the amount of the benefit and there is no other nonexempt  
58 caretaker relative in the household; (4) a family with a caretaker  
59 relative caring for a child who is under one year of age and who was  
60 born not more than ten months after the family's enrollment if there is  
61 no other nonexempt caretaker relative in the household; (5) a family  
62 with a pregnant or postpartum caretaker relative if a physician has  
63 indicated that such relative is unable to work and there is no other  
64 nonexempt caretaker relative in the household; (6) a family with a  
65 caretaker relative determined by the commissioner to be unemployable  
66 and there is no other nonexempt caretaker relative in the household;  
67 and (7) minor parents attending and satisfactorily completing high  
68 school or high school equivalency programs.

69 (c) A family who is subject to time-limited temporary family  
70 assistance benefits may petition the Commissioner of Social Services  
71 for six-month extensions of such benefits. The commissioner shall  
72 grant not more than two extensions to such family who has made a  
73 good faith effort to comply with the requirements of the program and  
74 despite such effort has a total family income at a level below the  
75 payment standard, or has encountered circumstances preventing  
76 employment including, but not limited to: (1) Domestic violence or  
77 physical harm to such family's children; or (2) other circumstances  
78 beyond such family's control. The commissioner shall disregard ninety  
79 dollars of earned income in determining applicable family income. The  
80 commissioner may grant a subsequent six-month extension if each  
81 adult in the family meets one or more of the following criteria: (A) The

82 adult is precluded from engaging in employment activities due to  
 83 domestic violence or another reason beyond the adult's control; (B) the  
 84 adult has two or more substantiated barriers to employment including,  
 85 but not limited to, the lack of available child care, substance abuse or  
 86 addiction, severe mental or physical health problems, one or more  
 87 severe learning disabilities, domestic violence or a child who has a  
 88 serious physical or behavioral health problem; (C) the adult is working  
 89 thirty-five or more hours per week, is earning at least the minimum  
 90 wage and continues to earn less than the family's temporary family  
 91 assistance payment standard; or (D) the adult is employed and works  
 92 less than thirty-five hours per week due to (i) a documented medical  
 93 impairment that limits the adult's hours of employment, provided the  
 94 adult works the maximum number of hours that the medical condition  
 95 permits, or (ii) the need to care for a disabled member of the adult's  
 96 household, provided the adult works the maximum number of hours  
 97 the adult's caregiving responsibilities permit. Families receiving  
 98 temporary family assistance shall be notified by the department of the  
 99 right to petition for such extensions. Notwithstanding the provisions of  
 100 this section, the commissioner shall not provide benefits under the  
 101 state's temporary family assistance program to a family that is subject  
 102 to the twenty-one month benefit limit and has received benefits  
 103 beginning on or after October 1, 1996, if such benefits result in that  
 104 family's receiving more than sixty months of time-limited benefits  
 105 unless that family experiences domestic violence, as defined in Section  
 106 402(a)(7)(B), P.L. 104-193. For the purpose of calculating said sixty-  
 107 month limit: (I) A month shall count toward the limit if the family  
 108 receives assistance for any day of the month, and (II) a month in which  
 109 a family receives temporary assistance for needy families benefits that  
 110 are issued from a jurisdiction other than Connecticut shall count  
 111 toward the limit.

112 (d) [Under said program] Except as provided in subsection (e) of  
 113 this section, (1) no family shall be eligible for temporary family  
 114 assistance benefits that has total gross [earnings] income exceeding the

115 federal poverty level, however, in the calculation of the benefit amount  
116 for eligible families and previously eligible families that become  
117 ineligible temporarily because of receipt of workers' compensation  
118 benefits by a family member who subsequently returns to work  
119 immediately after the period of receipt of such benefits, earned income  
120 shall be disregarded up to one hundred fifty per cent of the federal  
121 poverty level; and (2) the increase in benefits to a family in which an  
122 infant is born after the initial ten months of participation in the  
123 program shall be limited to an amount equal to fifty per cent of the  
124 average incremental difference between the amounts paid per each  
125 family size. Except when determining eligibility for a six-month  
126 extension of benefits pursuant to subsection (c) of this section, the  
127 commissioner shall disregard the first fifty dollars per month of  
128 income attributable to current child support that a family receives in  
129 determining eligibility and benefit levels for temporary family  
130 assistance. Any current child support in excess of fifty dollars per  
131 month collected by the department on behalf of an eligible child shall  
132 be considered in determining eligibility but shall not be considered  
133 when calculating benefits and shall be taken as reimbursement for  
134 assistance paid under this section, except that when the current child  
135 support collected exceeds the family's monthly award of temporary  
136 family assistance benefits plus fifty dollars, the current child support  
137 shall be paid to the family and shall be considered when calculating  
138 benefits.

139 (e) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (d) of this section,  
140 a family shall remain eligible for temporary family assistance benefits  
141 for the twenty-one-month eligibility period if a member becomes  
142 employed and the family's gross income does not exceed one hundred  
143 fifty per cent of the federal poverty level. To the extent permissible  
144 under federal law, a family whose gross income is less than one  
145 hundred fifty per cent of the federal poverty level after a member  
146 becomes employed shall receive the lesser of (1) an increase in benefits  
147 for the remainder of the twenty-one-month eligibility period equal to

148 the difference between such family's gross income and one hundred  
 149 fifty per cent of the federal poverty level, or (2) an increase in benefits  
 150 equal to the difference between what such formerly unemployed  
 151 member would earn in unemployment benefits for the remainder of  
 152 the twenty-one-month eligibility period and wages or salary earned for  
 153 employment that pays less than such unemployment benefits.

154 [(e)] (f) A family receiving temporary family assistance [under said  
 155 program] benefits shall cooperate with child support enforcement,  
 156 under title IV-D of the Social Security Act. A family shall be ineligible  
 157 for benefits for failure to cooperate with child support enforcement.

158 [(f)] (g) A family leaving the temporary family assistance program  
 159 at the end of (1) [said] the twenty-one-month time limit, including a  
 160 family with income above the payment standard, or (2) the sixty-  
 161 month limit shall have an interview for the purpose of being informed  
 162 of services that may continue to be available to such family, including  
 163 employment services available through the Labor Department. [Said  
 164 interview shall contain] The Department of Social Services shall  
 165 provide a determination of benefits available to [said] the family  
 166 [provided by the Department of Social Services] during the interview.  
 167 [Said] The interview shall also include a determination of whether  
 168 such family is eligible for supplemental nutrition assistance or  
 169 Medicaid. Information and referrals shall be made to such [a] family  
 170 for services and benefits including, but not limited to, the earned  
 171 income tax credit, rental subsidies emergency housing, employment  
 172 services and energy assistance.

173 [(g)] (h) An applicant or recipient of temporary family assistance  
 174 who is adversely affected by a decision of the Commissioner of Social  
 175 Services may request and shall be provided a hearing in accordance  
 176 with section 17b-60.

177 Sec. 2. Subsection (a) of section 17b-112b of the general statutes is  
 178 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*

179 1, 2016):

180 (a) An applicant or recipient who is a past or present victim of  
 181 domestic violence or at risk of further domestic violence, pursuant to  
 182 subsection (c) of section 17b-112a, shall, for good cause: (1) Be excused  
 183 from failing to participate in a work activity; or (2) be exempted from  
 184 child support enforcement requirements pursuant to subsection [(e)]  
 185 (f) of section 17b-112, as amended by this act. Such an applicant or  
 186 recipient may, for good cause, be granted an extension of cash  
 187 assistance beyond twenty-one months, provided the domestic violence  
 188 experienced is of sufficient magnitude to reasonably render the  
 189 individual unable to obtain or maintain employment.

190 Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2016*) Within available appropriations,  
 191 the Commissioner of Social Services shall provide a one-time payment  
 192 of one thousand dollars to a former recipient of temporary family  
 193 assistance who, on or after July 1, 2016, becomes employed not later  
 194 than twelve months after exhausting temporary family assistance  
 195 benefits.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2016</i>	17b-112
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2016</i>	17b-112b(a)
Sec. 3	<i>July 1, 2016</i>	New section

**Statement of Purpose:**

To provide incentives for temporary family assistance beneficiaries to find employment.

*[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]*